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Identical letters dated 26 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

With reference to the identical letters dated 27 August 2001 addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations (S/2001/823), I have the honour to state that I have received instructions from my Government to inform you that the Iraqi authorities are continuing their practice of violating Saudi territory in violation of the relevant boundary agreements and international covenants. I should accordingly like to convey to you the following:

At 11 p.m. on 25 August 2001, five armed Iraqis infiltrated from Iraqi territory and penetrated some 800 metres into the Kingdom's territory. At the time, a three-man Saudi Frontier Force patrol from the Kasr post was in position alongside the Saudi asphalt pipeline. The infiltrators came upon the patrol unexpectedly and fired on it, so that Private Sa'd bin Ali al-Silbi was shot. He was dragged into Iraqi territory by them, and it is still not known whether he was still alive or had died of his wounds.

The site of the incident, which took place inside Saudi territory, was photographed. It shows traces where the wounded Saudi soldier was dragged and traces of his blood. The spent ammunition left by the Iraqi infiltrators has also been preserved.

This act of aggression is not the first in which Iraqi forces have violated the Kingdom's borders in an attempt to create an atmosphere of tension and to invent stories that flout the truth and do no kind of service to international peace and security. These Iraqi attacks have been recurrent, and the most recent of them was that reported to you at the time it occurred in my letter of 29 May 2001 (S/2001/547).

That the Government of Iraq violated Saudi territory is confirmed by the fact that my Government received a note from the Arabian peninsula office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Kuwait informing it that ICRC had received a request from the Iraqi Government through its office in Baghdad that it should oversee the handing over of the body of the Saudi soldier, Private Sa'd al-Silbi, to Saudi Arabia. This confirms that the Iraqi authorities had abducted him and had killed him inside Iraqi territory, as shown by the evidence previously cited.

The Iraqis designated a time for the body of the slain Saudi soldier to be handed over at the Judaydah post on the Saudi Arabia-Iraq boundary, namely 9 a.m.

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on 4 September 2001. My Government immediately acceded to this request, coordinated its action with ICRC and took all the required measures. Regrettably, however, the Iraqis did not appear at the agreed location to hand over the body. This provides further evidence of Iraq's lack of concern and indifference with regard to humanitarian aspects, which has always characterized its handling of the issue of prisoners and detainees, and of the fact that it adopts an approach of procrastination and delay in dealing with such matters.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia holds Iraq fully responsible for the fate of the Saudi soldier Sa'd al-Silbi, and it urges Iraq to return his body as quickly as possible.

This aggression and the Iraqi violations of Saudi territory that preceded it indicate that Iraq is persisting in its threats to peace and security in the region. Saudi Arabia thus finds it necessary to inform the United Nations of the facts and circumstances of these violations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. In informing the United Nations and the Security Council of the facts concerning the Iraqi acts of aggression in order to urge Iraq to refrain from such actions and from violations of its borders, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia affirms its inalienable right to defend its territory and its citizens in the ways it deems appropriate under international law.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fawzi Bin Abdul Majeed **Shobokshi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative